HUMAN SECURITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
COMPARATIVE RESEARCH IN FOUR ASIAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: This report is based on current research on human security and social development in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Human security is defined as a condition in which people are protected and empowered to cope with severe and sudden threats to their survival, livelihood and dignity. The research hypothesis is that human security derives from a structure of protection and empowerment; increasing human security will remove obstacles, facilitate trust and improve the environment for social development.

This study identifies (1) useful indicators of human security and practical means to collect data on those indicators; (2) ways in which human security analysis can help to inform policy judgments, increase the effectiveness of development cooperation, and advance social development. Indicators of survival, livelihood, and dignity help create a profile of the state of human security and to guide in-depth country research.

Preliminary findings suggest that:

- There is a strong correlation between poverty, low levels of human security and impaired social development.
- Human security is largely a local phenomenon. Indicators based on national data and statistics do not provide sufficient guidance on effective policies and actions to strengthen human security.
- Community level research can identify specific causes of insecurity and suggest means to protect and empower people to cope with threats to their security.

Keywords: human security, empowerment, protection, indicators, survival, livelihood, dignity, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Thailand

Note: This paper was prepared on the eve of the conference, prior to the completion of essential field research. The content of the paper is subject to substantial change as more complete information becomes available.

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1. BACKGROUND ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SECURITY

This research project is examining the relationship of human security to social development. This is a challenging undertaking for many reasons, not the least of which is the absence of precise, widely accepted definitions of the basic concepts that are the subjects of the study. An inquiry into the relationship between social development and human security needs to begin with an understanding of what these two ideas are about.

The World Bank’s sector strategy paper for social development, adopted in January 2005, simply states that “social development means transforming institutions to empower people.”1 Readily available background information provides illumination about the meaning of this brief statement. The strategy begins by observing the intractable challenges of structural inequality and the need to address the issues of inclusion, cohesion and accountability by transforming “the broad set of institutions that determine the quality of growth, service delivery and human development.”2 A recent review of World Bank social development activities by the Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) provided further explanation by quoting with approval from the social development strategy’s issues paper:

Social development begins with the perspectives of poor and marginalized people and works towards positive and sustainable changes to make societies more equitable, inclusive and just.3

The basic idea is that economic growth needs to be complemented with efforts to achieve more cohesive societies with inclusive and accountable institutions. In the words of the World Bank social development strategy, “[t]he world won’t meet the [Millennium Development Goals] without complementary economic and social development efforts.”4

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2 Ibid.


The concept of human security has likewise proven to be elusive since it was first introduced into the development lexicon in the early 1990s. The United Nations Human Development Programme’s 1994 Human Development Report urged that the notion of security should be expanded to emphasize people and sustainable development. The report described human security as having two main aspects: “It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life…”

The Commission on Human Security adopted a broad definition in its 2003 report: “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment.” The Commission elaborated on this definition with the following explanation:

*Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations.*

The definitional problem has been chiefly in identifying where human security begins and ends. The UNDP Report discussed seven “main categories” of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. The 2003 report of the Commission on Human Security referred to “political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and

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7 UNDP Report, pages 24-25.
dignity," and suggested a list of ten “starting points” to address human security. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has suggested the broadest definition of all:

*Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It embraces human rights and good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her own potential.*

At the other end of the spectrum, some analysts have sought to give a more precise meaning to human security by defining it to include only insecurity resulting from conflict and other forms of political violence. For example, the Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia “has adopted the narrower concept of human security that focuses on protecting individuals and communities from violence.” Likewise, Kanti Bajpai of the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame describes human security as a concept that “relates to the protection of the individual’s personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence.” The *Human Security Report 2005*, compiled by Professor Andrew Mack of the Human Security Centre, discusses the differences between the proponents of the “broad” and the “narrow” views of human security and explains why the *Human Security Report* chose to use the narrow view.

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9 Commission Report, page 133. The ten “starting points” included: protecting people in violent conflict; protecting people from the proliferation of arms; supporting the human security of people on the move; establishing human security transition funds for post-conflict situations; encouraging fair trade and markets to benefit the extreme poor; providing minimum living standards everywhere; according high priority to universal access to basic health care; developing an efficient and equitable system for patent rights; empowering all people with universal basic education, through much stronger global and national efforts; clarifying the need for a global human identify while respecting the freedom of individuals to have diverse identities and affiliations.


A significant distinguishing quality of human security, and one that begins to suggest an answer to the question of how it differs from other development concepts, was discussed by Commission on Human Security Co-Chair Amartya Sen in a brief essay in the Commission’s report. “The idea of human development has a powerfully buoyant quality, since it is concerned with progress and augmentation.” By contrast, he continued, human security “fruitfully supplements the expansionist perspective of human development by directly paying attention to what are sometimes called ‘downside risks’.”

It is noteworthy that Dr. Sen describes the downside risks embraced by the concept of human security as possessing qualities of severity and suddenness. In his essay, quoted at the outset of this report, he refers to “insecurities that threaten human survival…or imperil the natural dignity of men and women…or subject vulnerable people to abrupt penury” and to “the dangers of sudden deprivation.”

Those qualities of severity and suddenness are consistent with the description of human security in the 1994 UNDP Report quoted above – “chronic threats” and “sudden and hurtful disruptions.” Likewise, the core of the Commission on Human Security’s definition emphasizes issues of a certain intensity, that is “protecting fundamental freedoms…that are the essence of life” and “protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats.”

A number of commentators have suggested that emphasis on those severity and suddenness aspects of impediments to human security can help to sharpen the focus of research and analysis and enhance the practical usefulness of a human security perspective in policy and programmatic support for social development. That is the approach taken in the present study. Human security will be measured by reference to the impact on people’s lives without regard to the cause of that impact, with emphasis on severe and sudden impacts.

15 Ibid.
16 See text accompanying note 5, supra.
17 See text accompanying note 6, supra.
Thus, for purpose of this study:

**Social development is seen as a process of positive change that is a vital complement to economic development. It involves transforming institutions, empowering the poor and marginalized, and achieving more cohesive societies. Cohesive societies with inclusive and accountable institutions promote more equal access to opportunities; they work together to address common needs, overcome constraints, and accommodate diverse interests.**

**Human security is seen as a condition in which people are protected and empowered to cope with severe and sudden threats to their survival, livelihood and dignity. It deals with conditions and events that impede the ability of people and communities to live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; and have access to resources and the basic necessities of life.**19

Social development and human security are people-centered approaches. Both are focused on the poor and marginalized, and both are pursued through strategies of protection and empowerment. Logic suggests that conditions of low human security impede progress in social development and that low levels of social development increase the risks to human security. This is borne out by many examples: societies where human survival is threatened often display a lack of cohesiveness; threats to livelihood are associated with failures of inclusion; and human dignity is affected, for better or for worse, by the accountability of institutions.

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19 The members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee adopted the following definition of security in the *DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict*, OECD, Paris, 2001, page 38:

“Security” is increasingly viewed as an all-encompassing condition in which people and communities live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being. Underpinning this broader understanding is a recognition that the security of people and the security of states are mutually reinforcing. It follows that a wide range of state institutions and other entities may be responsible for ensuring some aspect of security. This understanding of security is consistent with the broad notion of human security promoted by the United Nations Development Programme and widely used by development actors.
Yet, research on social development (and its principles of inclusion, cohesion and accountability) and research on human security (and its dimensions of survival, livelihood and dignity) have proceeded largely on separate tracks. Notwithstanding the absence of precise definitions, we know enough about social development and human security to permit an examination of how they influence each other. The prospect of learning how social development and human security can both be enhanced by such an examination is the motivation for this study.

2. Purpose of the Study

This study has two objectives. The first is to improve capacity for human security analysis by developing appropriate indicators for measuring human security and refining practical means of collecting data relating to those indicators in specific country and community settings. The second objective is to identify ways in which human security analysis can help to inform policy judgments, increase the effectiveness of development cooperation, and generally advance social development, especially for vulnerable populations.

In a 2004 study of donor policies and practices carried out for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), IC Net researchers observed that in low income countries under stress a lack of human security appeared to inhibit productive activity, long-term perspective and social cohesion to such an extent that development never gained a foothold. Yet, the current paradigm of development partnership had not adequately engaged vulnerable people in the countries least ready to assume the responsibilities of partnership. This raised the question of whether human security considerations could be better integrated into social development policies and programs so as to increase their effectiveness. The study recommended that the practical value of human security be examined by concentrating on:

1. Countries where human security is the weakest – countries in conflict or emerging from conflict; other fragile states and, in general, low income countries under stress; and
2. Aspects of human security that are most directly relevant to the survival, livelihoods and dignity of people in such countries.20

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The present study seeks to produce an organized body of practical knowledge about the experience of four Asian countries in dealing with the physical (survival), economic (livelihood) and political (dignity) aspects of human security. This body of knowledge is intended to provide a partial response to the fundamental question raised but left unanswered by IC Net’s earlier work. Our intention is to contribute to greater effectiveness of efforts to shape policies and institutions so as to foster increased human security and thereby accelerate social development.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND QUESTIONS

Our research is proceeding from the following hypothesis:

Security derives from a structure of protection and empowerment that enables people to cope with threats to their survival, economic well being and dignity. Where there is human security, people are better able to shift their attention from immediate risks and basic needs to progressively higher expectations and desires for development and fulfillment. Increased human security thus removes obstacles, facilitates trust and improves the environment for social development. International cooperation can help to increase human security. Doing so should contribute to the effectiveness of development efforts, including progress toward the Millennium Development Goals.

We are testing this hypothesis by examining the state of human security in four countries, all of which have experienced development progress, but where various factors, including persistent conditions and disruptive shocks, have exerted negative pressures on human security, and hence on social development. In particular, the study tested the relevance of proposed indicators of human security to social development, with emphasis on disadvantaged populations.

The analytical framework for this research program treats human security and social development as related elements of a virtuous circle of increasing human well being and fulfillment. At the center of this circle, individuals and communities that benefit from protection and empowerment – through their own efforts and with the cooperation of other actors – exert direct impact is consistent with the idea, discussed above, that severity and suddenness of impediments are integral to the definition of human security.
pressure to expand the circle and increase well being. Their efforts are vulnerable to conditions and shocks that exert pressure to shrink the circle and diminish human well being, as illustrated below.

![Analytical Framework](image)

**Figure 1. Analytical Framework**

Our research is addressing nine basic questions relating to the foregoing hypotheses:

1. What are the greatest risks to human security in all its dimensions – physical, economic and political?

2. Who are the people most vulnerable to those risks?

3. What factors, such as societal divisions, contribute to their vulnerability?

4. What measures are available to protect vulnerable people from the risks, and how are they empowered to cope with and overcome the risks themselves?

5. What are the opportunities for diminishing the risks and what impediments might impair efforts to diminish them?

6. What strengths and weaknesses in institutions, rules and behavior are most relevant to efforts to increase the human security of vulnerable populations?
7. How has the country managed significant shocks, such as major natural disasters, that were likely to diminish human security and how have different populations with different levels of human security been affected?

8. How has international cooperation contributed to or detracted from progress in increasing human security?

9. How have trends and changes in levels of human security, especially changes resulting from shocks, affected capacities for social development?

4. SELECTION OF COUNTRIES AND SHOCKS

The study began with the selection of countries to be included. The countries selected were Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. These countries were selected with a view to providing opportunities for instructive comparison. All four countries have significant disadvantaged population groups and all have had experience with major threats to the security of those groups. Bangladesh and Cambodia are IDA-eligible countries. Cambodia has been the subject of recent attention by the World Bank’s Initiative on Low Income Countries under Stress (LICUS).21 Sri Lanka, despite impressive social development progress, has been plagued by ethnic conflict and exclusion of a sizable minority population. Thailand has enjoyed the most balanced development, but confronts a number of challenges to human security.

Two countries (Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) are located in South Asia; two (Cambodia and Thailand) are in Southeast Asia. Each pair of countries within the same region exhibits comparable differences with respect to population, per capita income, and human development ranking. These choices thus permit comparisons between countries in the same region with differing populations and income, as well as comparisons between countries of comparable population and income in different regions. There are abundant published data about all four countries and no exceptional difficulties were foreseen in conducting field research in any of the

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21 See “What has been done under the LICUS Initiative?” at www.worldbank.org/licus.
selected countries. (Problems with data and constraints on conducting field research ruled out some alternative choices.)

Table 1. Overview of the Selected Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>GDP per capita (constant US$)</th>
<th>HDI Ranking (UNDP 2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: World Development Indicators and UNDP

In all four countries, research included an examination of the impact of a shock on human security. In Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand, recent and severe storms were obvious choices. In Cambodia, the researchers decided to examine the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In each case. The rationale for selection is included in the country report. It should be noted that in Bangladesh, unlike the unanticipated tsunami that devastated coastal areas of Sri Lanka and Thailand, storms and floods are predictable, recurring phenomena. This suggested that the political (dignity) dimension of human security would be especially important in this context. Also, in the case of Sri Lanka, field research included two affected communities, one with Singhalese and one with a Tamil population. This introduced consideration of the implications for human security of the longstanding ethnic conflict in that country.

5. SELECTION OF INDICATORS OF HUMAN SECURITY

The second step in the study was to identify a set of indicators of human security that might serve to assess conditions and trends in a wide range of countries. The research team applied the following criteria to the selection of appropriate indicators:

1. Does the indicator constitute a reasonable proxy for a key issue arising under one of the three dimensions of human security: survival, livelihood and dignity?

2. Is the indicator likely to have a distinctive impact on vulnerable populations whose human security may be different than that of the general population?
3. Is there a reliable and reasonably current source of data for the indicator with respect to the vast majority of countries?

4. Are changes in the data associated with corresponding changes in human security likely to be observable within a reasonable timeframe?

5. Does the indicator contribute to a more complete understanding of human security without excessively duplicating some other indicator?

6. Is the indicator sufficiently discriminating so that it helps to show differences between countries?

Applying these criteria, and testing their application to the four selected countries, the research team chose the following 12 indicators of human security to be tested in the course of this study:

**Survival Indicators**
1. Access to food
2. Access to water
3. Vulnerability to violent conflict
4. Access to health services

**Livelihood Indicators**
5. Access to education
6. Access to income
7. Vulnerability to poverty
8. Access to electricity

**Dignity Indicators**
9. Voice and accountability
10. Vulnerability to corruption
11. Access to justice
12. Gender integration.

The survival indicators are measures of access to basic necessities (food, water, health services) and risks of violence. The livelihood indicators measure economic well being and opportunity to earn a living. The dignity indicators measure the quality and openness of governance and opportunity for participation.

The team constructed an index by measuring human security, based on these 12 indicators, in the 57 countries identified in the 2005 *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme as enjoying “High Human Development.” That diverse group includes countries of different regions, population sizes and densities, resource endowments, histories and cultural backgrounds. What they have in common is that all have achieved a high level of human development. The average performance of those countries with respect to each indicator of human security is the benchmark for measuring country performance, with an assigned value of 100 in order to facilitate cross-country comparisons. The index assigns a score of 0 to whatever country performance ranks last on the ranking of all countries for the indicator in question. For example, since no country is completely without access to safe water, the index assigns a score of 0 to the percentage of access shown for the country with the least access to safe water in the World Development Indicators database. The index provides a consistent basis for comparing human security with human development attainment, with a view to identifying correlations and insights.
### Table 2 Human Security Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Human Security Interests</th>
<th>Challenges to HS</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survival (physical security)</strong></td>
<td>Access to food, shelter, basic health services, vulnerability to conflict, violent crime, environment hazards, natural disasters</td>
<td>1 Access to Food</td>
<td>Population undernourished (% of total population) FAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Access to Water</td>
<td>Access to safe water (% of total population) WB World Development Indicators (WDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Conflict Vulnerability</td>
<td>Immunization, measles (% of children ages 12-23) University of Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Access to health services</td>
<td>Access to food, shelter, basic health services, vulnerability to conflict, violent crime, environment hazards, natural disasters WB WDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livelihood (economic security)</strong></td>
<td>Access to education and training, employment opportunities, access to credit, access to resources; vulnerability to poverty</td>
<td>5 Access to education</td>
<td>Youth Literacy Rate (15-24 years old) UNESCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Access to income</td>
<td>GNI per capita (PPP) WB WDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Vulnerability to poverty</td>
<td>Population below national poverty line (% of total population) WB WDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Access to electricity</td>
<td>Access to electricity (% of total population) WB WDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dignity (political security)</strong></td>
<td>Accountable governance, rule of law, access to information, opportunities for democratic participation</td>
<td>9 Participation</td>
<td>Voice and accountability WB governance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Corruption Vulnerability</td>
<td>Control of corruption WB governance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 Access to justice</td>
<td>Rule of law WB governance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 Gender integration</td>
<td>Gender empowerment UNDP Gender Empowerment Measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the relevant data sets provide information only at a national level the team relied on additional research instruments to develop specific information at the community level in order to assess the human security of vulnerable populations.

### 6. Analysis Based on the Human Security Indicators

As discussed at the beginning of this paper, social development is a process of improving human well being, while human security is an enabling condition that helps make social
development possible. Human security is a necessary, but hardly sufficient condition to achieve social development.

Many of the indicators of social development are also indicators of human security.\(^{22}\) The difference is that measures of social development are focused on human progress, while measures of human security address severe and sudden threats and impediments to human progress. While vulnerability to conflict is one of the selected indicators, the indicators do not otherwise distinguish on the basis of the particular causes of a country’s score when measuring its performance against the indicators. Conditions of human security resulting from political violence and those attributable to other causes are treated alike. Thus, severe malnutrition or poverty due to natural phenomena or weak governance are considered no less threats to human security than if they were caused by conflict.

In seeking to identify how weak human security impedes social development, this study looked at the same issues of survival, livelihood and dignity in each of four countries. First, it examined these issues at a national level using published quantitative data. It then examined the same issues at the community level in order to gain a qualitative understanding of the impact of threats to human security on disadvantaged and marginalized segments of the population.

At a national level, strengths and weaknesses in human security in the four countries under study are illustrated in Table 3 below, and in accompanying radar charts that compare the performance of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand with the average of high human development countries. This preliminary analysis is intended to identify areas where protection and empowerment might be expected to increase human security and thereby enhance capacity for social development.

The indicators show similarities as well as differences among the countries. All have achieved significant levels of food security. Three of the four (all but Cambodia) have achieved impressive levels of access to potable water. Three of the four (all but Bangladesh) have also achieved high levels of access to education. On the other hand, all show low levels of income (even using the PPP method) in comparison to the average of the high human development countries. There appears to be a strong correlation between respect for human dignity through good governance, on the one hand, and physical and economic well being on the other.

More specifically, the human security profile of each country corresponds closely to the status of social development in that country. In particular:

In **Bangladesh**, it can be seen at the national level that there is good performance in access to food, water and health care. Bangladesh scores 60 points or better on each of these indicators. The principal threat to physical security is a high vulnerability to conflict. Economic security is a very different matter, with low scores on all indicators, indicating severely constrained access to education, income and electricity and a high rate of poverty. Similarly, Bangladesh scores low (50 points or less) on all indicators of human dignity – participation, corruption, justice and gender.

**Cambodia** demonstrates low scores on all indicators of human security, with the sole – and hopeful – exception of access to education. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Cambodians enjoy much improved human security than they did just a few years ago. It is at the midpoint between the worst and the best performers in access to food and level of poverty. It scores below 50 on all aspects of political security.

**Sri Lanka** presents a unique set of contrasts. High scores on access to food, water and health services are undermined by exceptional vulnerability to conflict. First-world-level educational opportunities contrast with low incomes. High participation in governance is diminished by unequal opportunities for women.

**Thailand** offers a more balanced picture, with generally high levels of human security. Modest weaknesses are evident in the indicators for conflict vulnerability, access to income and vulnerability to corruption.
Table 3. Human Security Indicator Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survival</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Food</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Water</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Conflict</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Health</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livelihood</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Education</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Income</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Poverty</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Electricity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dignity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Corruption</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Justice</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Gender</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3A. Bangladesh Performance
Figure 3B. Cambodia Performance
Figure 3C. Sri Lanka Performance
Figure 3D. Thailand Performance
The limited information revealed by the indicator scores described above provides few surprises. On the other hand, it provides only a little guidance. It is possible to associate weak performance in the various areas of human security with needs for policies to protect and empower the negatively affected populations. A simple illustration is provided in Table 4, below. However, much more information is needed for informed judgment about appropriate policy responses. The central question remains whether a focus on observed weaknesses in human security will be a cost-effective and practical way to contribute to social development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges to human security</th>
<th>Nature of human security interests</th>
<th>Time frame of interventions</th>
<th>Policy themes to protect and empower people to cope with challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence, hunger, health, environmental hazards, natural disasters</td>
<td>Survival (Physical)</td>
<td>Immediate and medium term</td>
<td>Access to food, shelter, basic health services; protection from conflict, violent crime, environmental hazards, natural disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment, poverty, limited access to education, assets</td>
<td>Livelihood (Economic)</td>
<td>Medium and long term</td>
<td>Access to education and training; employment opportunities, access to means to earn a livelihood; access to markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbitrary government action, corruption, impunity, inequality</td>
<td>Dignity (Political)</td>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>Accountable governance, rule of law; access to information; equal opportunities for democratic participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. **ANALYSIS BASED ON FIELD RESEARCH**

The principal researchers have visited each country to conduct participatory **individual and focus group interviews, workshops and direct observation** to collect qualitative data which reflect the reality of socially disadvantaged people in two different communities in each country. Local consultants familiar with situations at the community level assisted in and complemented this effort. In order to ensure a common methodology, all researchers drew upon a common set of **questionnaires and interview protocols** for the conduct of focus groups, workshops and interviews in the communities visited. Field research also included in-country interviews with local officials, civil society organizations and the international development community.
Available information from preliminary reports of field research indicates some striking similarities among the four countries.

- Whatever the national level data may show, there are significant populations whose level of social development is far below the national average.
- The disadvantaged segment of the population has little or no voice on issues of governance. These people are the victims of corruption, neglect, and arbitrary policies.
- The political insecurity of the disadvantaged is a major factor that increases their vulnerability to severe conditions and sudden shocks. At the same time, that political insecurity diminishes their ability to respond to threats to their physical and economic security.
- The absence of mechanisms to assure transparency, receive input, and resolve disputes tends over time to erode cohesion and diminish the ability of communities to benefit from available assistance.

Additional information from the country studies is expected to shed more light on quantitative differences between national levels of human security and levels of security in disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Field research should also produce additional information about human security trends in the countries under study – at the national and community levels, including the implications of major shocks.

8. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

While preliminary findings confirm much that was already known, they also point to a need for additional emphasis on human security at the community level.

The research confirms that there is a strong correlation between poverty, low levels of human security, and impaired social development. It is in the communities of disadvantaged and marginalized people where human security is at its lowest, and where a low level of human security is most significant in diminishing capacity for development progress.

The research also suggests that human security is largely a local phenomenon. There are great differences among population groups within all the studied countries with respect to conditions affecting human security. Indicators based on national data and statistics do not provide sufficient guidance on effective policies and actions to strengthen human security. Research at the community level is essential. Such community-level research can identify
specific causes of insecurity and suggest appropriate means to protect and empower people so that they can cope with the threats they face.

Finally, the research suggests that the most crucial aspect of human security may well be in the area of human dignity – the lack of political voice, legal rights, access to justice, and the ability to contest corruption and discrimination. In all the countries studied the poor are not only deprived; they are disenfranchised. They are deprived of their rights. This finding suggests that community-based approaches to development that emphasize rights should be an important aspect of increasing human security and advancing social development. Of course, such rights-based development can be frustrated by inhospitable national policies and institutions. National policies conducive to inclusion and respect for human dignity are highly relevant. Yet, they are not sufficient in themselves. Rather, they provide a permissive framework for intensive work in and by the communities concerned.
REFERENCES


